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For the Record

From Afghanistan International Update, a publication of the American Afghan Education Fund:

Only six weeks after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, a senior White House official leaked President Carter's decision to launch a major military assistance program to the Afghan resistance onto the front page of The New York Times. The secrecy of the CIA's Directorate of Operation's program to support the Afghan resistance had ended.

Although the operation is itself no longer a secret, a controversy over two contradictory versions of the quality of aid is now beginning to boil.

The first version is generated, primarily in Washington, D.C., behind a covert smokescreen by high-ranking CIA officials and other members of the executive branch. Classified and "off-the-record" briefings and high-level situation reports have presented a glowing picture of a superb, cost-effective CIA operation for elected American officials and decision-makers. Executive branch leaks to Time and U.S. News and World Report this June have described the CIA operation as "top-notch" and "daring."

Independent witnesses, who have traveled into the field with the Afghan resistance over the past four years, have come up with a completely different version of the story. The field version is one of outdated weapons, ammunition shortages and an overall CIA assistance program that systematically condemns the Afghan resistance to a slow death. . . .

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